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Legends of Camp Cherokee Book On Sale As 68th Season Opens

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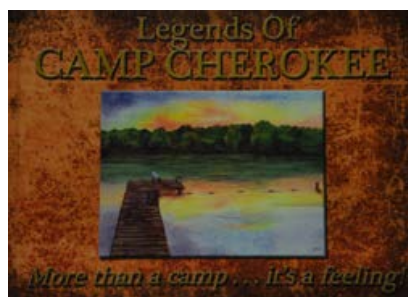
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Legends of Camp Cherokee Book On Sale As 68th Season Opens

Quick Facts

- "Legends of Camp Cherokee" is broken up into sections about the camp directors, sites around the camp such as the mess hall, waterfront, cabins and the athletic field.
- Camp Cherokee has been a summer retreat for generations of Carolina boys and girls, ages 6 to 14, since its opening in 1945.



ROCK HILL, S.C. - **Lee Miller's** recently released book is a loving tribute to Camp Cherokee and its campers' fond memories of summers spent at the [Kings Mountain State Park site](#).

Growing up in Tennessee, **Miller** never attended the YMCA camp as teen-ager but she spent weeks last year soaking up the camp lore, singing its corny songs around a campfire, practicing mess hall chants, playing games and enjoying the smiles of young campers and counselors. "Trying to be a kid again" is how

Miller characterized it.

The **four-color, coffee table style book** captures the camp's spirit through hundreds of photos and campers' memories dating back to the camp's opening. "The campers who came were rich and poor and they were all treated the same," Miller said. "They learned so many life skills. Some even met their future spouses."

Camp Cherokee has been a summer retreat for generations of Carolina boys and girls, ages 6 to 14, since its opening in 1945. As the camp heads into its 68th summer, its goal continues to be simple - "helping everyone reach their potential by building self-esteem, friendships and character in a safe environment."

"**Legends of Camp Cherokee**" is broken up into sections about the camp directors, sites around the camp such as the mess hall, waterfront, cabins and the athletic field. The author tugs at campers' heartstrings with song lyrics, poems, tales of the "Do-do- dilly-whopper" bird creature, reunion memories and a final chapter on "friends for a lifetime."

Rob Youngblood, president of the [York County Regional Chamber of Commerce](#), wrote that the camp strengthened his confidence and reinforced his self-esteem. A camper and then staff member during his teens, he nurtured his leadership skills at **Camp Cherokee**. His mom, **Patricia Courtney Youngblood**, first attended the camp and encouraged her son and daughter and then grandchildren to attend.

"I am quite appreciative and indebted to my parents for making my participation at camp a priority for which they saved throughout the year," **Youngblood** wrote.

Rene Herlong, another former camper who will mark his 36th year on the camp staff, said **Camp Cherokee** helped shape him into the person he is today. "Camp taught me that the greatest joy in life comes from helping others to find joy," said the camp doctor. "It taught me how to lead. It taught me how to teach. It taught me how to speak publicly. And it taught me how to care deeply for others."

Former camper and staffer during the 1970s, **Nell Boone Parker** said **Camp Cherokee** helped

prepare her for the most important job of her life – being a mother. “As a camp counselor I learned to be responsible for every child in my cabin 24 hours a day, 7 days a week,” she wrote. “I learned patience, compassion, the importance of planning ahead, being prepared, being on time and how to entertain a bunch of little kids on a rainy day... It taught me responsibility at a very young age.”

Past and present **Camp Cherokee directors** decided unanimously to dedicate “**Legends of Camp Cherokee**” to a man who helps keep the camp flourishing - **Robert M. Hope**.

"He epitomizes what the camp is all about," said Miller, a local author and administrative specialist for the **Department of Chemistry, Physics and Geology** and adjunct faculty member in the **Department of Sociology and Anthropology**.

Hope lost his son, Butch, at the age of 9 in 1963. Looking to fill the void of his son's loss, Hope directed the camp from 1965 to 1974 and then supervised it once he became the **YMCA's executive director**. The early years at the camp were tough, Hope recalled, because governments were starting to require more regulations.

Instead of shutting down the camp, Hope dug in to make the experience count for the hundreds of kids who spend a week of their summers soaking up the Carolina sun. After the loss of his son, he embraced his mission to provide an experience to all children that would allow them to develop their God-given talents. **Camp Cherokee** provides that arena, and Hope continues to stay in touch with many of many of the campers and counselors past and present.

Hope remains a fixture around Rock Hill and at the camp.

"Robert's enthusiasm for camp inspired others to put more effort into camp and it flourished," wrote Miller in the introduction. Hope and his staff's theme of "**There are no losers at Camp Cherokee**" gave the national YMCA office an idea for their slogan: "**Every kid's a winner**."

Helping pull the book together was **Barry Grant**, a local graphic designer. The two learned what Hope was trying to teach all along. "**It's more than a camp... it's a feeling**."

"**Legends of Camp Cherokee**" is available for \$35 by calling the **Upper Piedmont YMCA** regional office at 803/329-YMCA or **Amy Counterman** at 803/329-9622. All proceeds will go to camp operations. The first session for Camp Cherokee is June 9.

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